



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

26 AUG 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. John D. Ehrlichman
Special Assistant to the President
for Domestic Affairs

SUBJECT : Intelligence Leaks to the Press

1. I have received a request from your staff for a further study of intelligence leaks--similar to the one I forwarded you last week--but now covering the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. There are several complicating considerations which I want to call to your attention before deciding whether to proceed on this sizeable task.

2. Unlike our earlier study--which was based on current files--the study of leaks in the three previous Administrations would require a page-by-page search of newspapers from 1953 through 1969. Based on our experience with the first study, we estimate that the research would take the full time work of four experienced strategic military analysts between now and the end of the year. Inevitably, this would take away from the work on National Security Studies now being done in CIA for Henry Kissinger's staff.

3. There is, moreover, a fundamental substantive problem that would--in my view--seriously limit the utility of the results. This is the question of how to recreate in the analyst's mind the security environment of the time, whether it was the Fifties or the early or mid-Sixties. For the study just sent you, the events were fresh in the minds of the analysts, but that would not be true even for the early years of the Johnson Administration.

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Great care would be needed not only to select and evaluate the individual items but also to assure they were considered in the proper context, and frankly I don't know how successful we would be.

4. When I consider the real costs (14-16 man-months of effort by senior strategic military analysts) and the uncertain results, I question the advisability of continuing in the direction suggested by your staff. May we please talk if you feel that the project must be undertaken despite the foregoing considerations.

Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

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